

**BETTWS NEWYDD OPPOSITION GROUP  
(BNOG)**

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Mr Tegryn Jones, Chief Executive,  
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority,  
Llanion Park , Pembroke Dock SA72 6DY

18th March 2012

Dear Mr Jones,

BNOG's complaint about your Authority's handling of complaints concerning Bettws Newydd.

Thank you for your letter of 12th March in reply to mine of 2<sup>nd</sup> February, six weeks ago.

In the interim, on behalf of BNOG, I have asked the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales to consider BNOG's complaint that the Authority has not properly investigated points of maladministration by Officers in relation to Bettws Newydd – which we said would happen in the event of your not responding to our second letter on this matter of 27th February.

As we have previously indicated, when asked on the Ombudsman's application form, '*What do you think should be done to put things right?*', we have answered '*Points of maladministration by Officers in handling applications at Bettws Newydd should be brought before the PCNPA Standards Committee for consideration of possible disciplinary action*'

Only now, and after submission of BNOG's complaint form to the Ombudsman, have you informed BNOG that our requests - that complaints relating to maladministration by Officers and not properly covered by the Monitoring Officer's Report, should be put before the PCNPA Standards Committee - are in your view, '*misconceived*'. Such requests have been made to you by letter four times, commencing on 10th May 2011, that is 9 months ago. At no point, despite these opportunities and others, did you inform BNOG that those requests were '*misconceived*'.

We allege that the reason that your Authority, BNOG and others failed to achieve our shared aims of a development at Bettws Newydd in compliance with the PCNPA Development Plan was that the areas of gross maladministration by at least one Officer cited by BNOG defeated the integrity of the planning and appeals system. In particular, BNOG

alleges that the withholding of material planning information from other Officers, Members, Town Councillors and the public - as well as from the consultants employed by the Authority over 18 months at huge public expense – amounts to malfeasance.

We believe that you share our concern that a case like Bettws Newydd should never be allowed to recur. We believe, however, that to address the process deficiencies alone is insufficient. Unless those responsible are held to account, you send out a signal that maladministration in your organisation will be tolerated. This is one of the reasons that BNOG is pursuing this.

Another is that, whilst the investigation into what went wrong at Bettws Newydd is incomplete, you are making changes to procedures, such as increased delegated powers under enforcement, and reduced opportunities for the public to speak to Officer Reports, which rely on a level of confidence in the quality of Officer decision making and reporting which we believe the points of maladministration that BNOG is highlighting show to be thoroughly misplaced.

BNOG therefore considers that it is unacceptable that you have not yet moved to bring Officers to account, if not by use of the PCNPA Scrutiny Committee's powers, then by whatever means available to you.

The Ombudsman's office has asked BNOG to supply further documentation by the end of this week. In the light of your letter, we will be requesting a modification of the submitted statement by BNOG referring to the Standards Committee, as quoted above, as that statement is now obviously futile. But we still hope to be able to tell the Ombudsman when we send this, that you will be reconsidering this matter.

BNOG will otherwise now clearly request that the Ombudsman's Office carry out directly an investigation of the two areas of gross maladministration by PCNPA Planning Officers in relation to Bettws Newydd as we have already set these out, and as attached again for your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Reg Atkinson  
Chairperson BNOG